

**Improved Chulha Programme in Rural Areas**

1135. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Improved Chulha Programme is confined to the poorest of the poor only in rural areas;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the measures being taken to popularise it among the higher income group people of the villages; and
- (d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI M. KANNAPPAN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The on-going Centrally Sponsored Scheme—National Programme on Improved Chulhas (NPIC) provides benefits to all sections of people in both rural and semi-urban areas. However, in case of portable metallic chulhas, the Central subsidy is restricted to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, only in the States and areas other than North-Eastern Region States, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep and notified hilly and desert areas, with a view to meet the demand as much as possible within the limited availability of budget.

(c) and (d) The measures taken to popularise improved chulhas among all sections, including higher income group people, in villages and also in semi-urban areas include: (i) publicity through both electronic and print media as well as local fairs, melas, etc.; (ii) involvement of large numbers of grass roots level non-governmental organizations; (iii) organisation of training courses for users and self employed workers mainly women in villages; (iv) establishing State level Technical Back Up Units for providing technical and training support; and (v) provisions of Central subsidy and self employed workers' (SEWs) charges for constructing chulhas and providing free maintenance warranty for the first year.